

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 30, 2020

The Honorable Mark T. Esper  
Secretary of Defense  
1400 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Esper:

We write to urge your clarification and immediate review of existing Department of Defense (DoD) active duty personnel policy on prohibited activities, particularly regarding extremist and white supremacist ideology and activity. Recent events have raised concerns that existing policies are insufficient and poorly enforced, risking not only the American people, but also other U.S. servicemembers.

We, like many Americans, responded with horror to the news that active duty Air Force Staff Sergeant Steven Carrillo was responsible for the recent killing of two law enforcement officers in Northern California and publicly declared his allegiance to the extremist Boogaloo movement by scrawling a phrase in blood on top of a stolen car. We are equally disturbed that just days ago U.S. Army Private Ethan Melzer was charged with sharing classified information to a neo-Nazi group. Such incidents, sadly, are just among the latest instances of an active duty servicemember demonstrating allegiance to or participation in an extremist or white supremacist organization.

In a House Armed Services Committee, Military Personnel Subcommittee Hearing on White Supremacy, Mr. Robert Grabosky, Deputy Director at the U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations (OSI), testified that Air Force policy does not prohibit membership in a white supremacist organization; rather, OSI only investigates “active participation”, such as fundraising for a white supremacist organization. Mr. Grabosky, however, also testified that an Air Force servicemember who was found to be fundraising for such an organization only received nonjudicial punishment and remains in the military, where, presumably, this individual continues to receive warfighting training.

Such a lax, unenforced, policy towards individuals that participate in extremist and white supremacist organizations is deeply concerning, especially as Air Force Staff Sergeant Carrillo is charged with the murder of law enforcement officers in Northern California. As such, we request your urgent response to the following questions:

1. Are servicemembers prohibited from membership in an organization that espouses an ideology or doctrine covered as prohibited activities under current DoD policy (DODI 1325.06)? If not, is it the position of the Department of Defense that it is acceptable for a servicemember to be a member of an extremist or white supremacist organization?

2. How does the Department currently track incidents of active participation (as defined in DODI 1325.06) in prohibited activities undertaken by servicemembers?
3. How does the Department define “supremacist” and “extremist” as referenced in DODI 1325.06? Are white supremacist groups covered by such terms?
4. What is the current policy for servicemembers who admit or are found to actively participate in extremist or white supremacist groups? Are they administratively separated? Are they subject to Non-Judicial Punishment? Is any action subject to the discretion of the commanding officer (i.e., not mandated or required)?
5. Was the Air Force aware that Staff Sergeant Carrillo was sympathetic to or an adherent to Boogaloo ideology?
6. What resources are devoted to addressing violations of DODI 1325.06? Are military criminal investigative organizations employed to investigate violations of this policy?
7. How does the Department assess potential recruits for membership in or affinity for white supremacist or extremist ideology?
  - a. Does Department policy allow former members of such groups, or those that have shown sympathies with supremacist or extremist ideologies, to join the Armed Forces? Are recruiters trained to recognize potential warning signs in prospective recruits?
8. What training does the Department provide to servicemembers to increase awareness about extremist or white supremacist attempts to recruit them? Do they receive counterintelligence training regarding extremist or white supremacist organizations?
9. Provide an update on the status on the implementation of Sec. 593 of the FY2020 NDAA on the incorporation of questions regarding extremism in surveys administered by the Department of Defense, to include which surveys were modified, the questions that were added, any preliminary data that has been collected, and how these surveys are being used to assess the prevalence of racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, white supremacy and other forms of bigotry.

We thank you for your time and attention to this matter and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



GILBERT R. CISNEROS, JR.  
Member of Congress



JACKIE SPEIER  
Member of Congress



ANTHONY G. BROWN  
Member of Congress



VERONICA ESCOBAR  
Member of Congress

/s/

DONALD S. BEYER, JR.  
Member of Congress

/s/

STEVE COHEN  
Member of Congress

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PETER A. DEFAZIO  
Member of Congress

/s/

BILL FOSTER  
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SYLVIA R. GARCIA  
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RAÚL M. GRIJALVA  
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ALCEE L. HASTINGS  
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SETH MOULTON  
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ILHAN OMAR  
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JAMIE RASKIN  
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DAVID N. CICILLINE  
Member of Congress

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JASON CROW  
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VAL BUTLER DEMINGS  
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RUBEN GALLEGOS  
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JARED GOLDEN  
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JAMES P. MCGOVERN  
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DONALD NORCROSS  
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ABIGAIL D. SPANBERGER  
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LORI TRAHAN  
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FILEMON VELA  
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ALAN LOWENTHAL  
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MIKE THOMPSON  
Member of Congress

cc

Secretary of the Army  
Secretary of the Navy  
Secretary of the Air Force  
Chief of Staff, Army  
Chief of Naval Operations  
Chief of Staff, Air Force  
Commandant of the Marine Corps  
Commandant of the Coast Guard  
Chief of Space Operations